

REMARKS

Claims 1-32 were presented for examination and were pending in this application. In an Official Action dated May 18, 2007, claims 1-6, 11-20, and 25-32 were rejected and claims 7-10 and 21-24 were objected to.

Claims 7-11 and 21-25 are amended herein and claims 1-6, 13-20, and 27-32 are canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is added by this amendment.

Based on the above Amendment and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections, and withdraw them.

Information Disclosure Statements

The Examiner is respectfully requested to consider and initial the following references included in the following information disclosure statements (IDS):

1. IDS received by the USPTO on August 15, 2005
 - Reference C1 (International Search Report dated April 26, 2005 for International Application No. PCT/JP2005/000428); and
 - Reference C2 (Written Opinion of the International Searching Authority dated April 26, 2005 for International Application No. PCT/JP2005/000428)
2. IDS received by the USPTO on September 27, 2004
 - Reference F (International Search Report dated January 13, 2004 for International Application No. PCT/JP03/12169)

Other references included in these IDS's have been considered and initialed by the Examiner, but the above three references lack the Examiner's initials on the PTO/SB/08

forms. Please consider and initial these references, and issue newly initialed, signed and dated PTO/SB/08 forms.

Response to Rejection Under 35 USC §102(a)

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 10-11, 13-16, 19, 20, and 25-32 were rejected under 35 USC §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2003-4470 A (“Otani”).

To begin with, Applicants note that claim 10 is included in Detailed Action section in the rejection under 35 USC 102(a) as part of “10-11.” However, this appears to be a typographical error in the Office Action, actually intended to reject claims 11-12 rather than claims 10-11, since (i) the Examiner separately indicated that claim 10 includes allowable subject matter, (ii) the Office Action Summary does not include claim 10 in the rejected claims but includes claim 10 in the objected claims, (iii) the subject matter discussed in rejecting claims 10-11 is actually directed to the subject matter recited in claims 11-12, and (iv) claim 12 is not discussed in the Detailed Action section but included in the rejected claims in the Office Action Summary. Thus, Applicants assume that the Office Action intended to reject claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 11-12, 13-16, 19, 20, and 25-32 (rather than claims 10-11) under 35 USC 102(a).

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 13-16, 19, 20, and 27-32 are canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer, merely to expedite the prosecution of this patent application. Thus the rejection of these claims is overcome.

Claim 7 is amended herein to be in independent form including the limitations of its base claim 1 and intervening claim 5, and claims 11-12 are amended directly or indirectly to depend from claim 7. The Office Action indicated that claim 7 includes allowable subject

matter. Thus, claims 11-12 as amended should also be allowable and the rejection of claims 11-12 is overcome.

Claim 21 is amended herein to be in independent form including the limitations of its base claim 15 and intervening claim 19, and claims 25-26 are amended directly or indirectly to depend from claim 21. The Office Action indicated that claim 21 includes allowable subject matter. Thus, claims 25-26 as amended should also be allowable and the rejection of claims 25-26 is overcome.

Response to Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 3, 4, and 17-18 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Otani in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0004717 (“Strom”).

Claims 3-4 and 17-18 are canceled herein, and thus the rejection of claims 3-4 and 17-18 is overcome.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7-10 and 21-24 were objected to, but the Office Action indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims.

Claims 7-10 are amended herein to be in independent form including all the limitations of their base claim 1 and intervening claim 5. Claims 21-24 are amended herein to be in independent form including all the limitations of their base claim 15 and intervening claim 19.

Thus, claims 7-10 and 21-24 should be allowable, and the objection to claims 7-10 and 21-24 is overcome.

Also note that claims 11-12 and 25-26, as amended, now depend directly or indirectly from amended independent claims 7 and 21, respectively. Thus, claims 11-12 and 25-26 should also be allowable.

Conclusion

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims 7-12 and 21-26 are in condition for allowance. Favorable action is hereby solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,
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